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Cc: Gray, David[gray.david@epa.gov]; Mylott, Richard[Mylott.Richard@epa.gov]; Grantham, Nancy[Grantham.Nancy@epa.gov]
From: StClair, Christie
Sent: Mon 10/19/2015 8:09:56 PM
Subject: RE: Wastewater treatment

Tripp, here's the congressional notification that went out on Friday.

Gold King Mine Water Treatment Plant About to Commence Operations

Incident Command closing; EPA regional and headquarters staff assuming long-term roles

I'm writing to notify you about two updates regarding the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's response to the Gold King Mine incident. Please let me know if you have any questions, comments or concerns.

Water Treatment Plant

The EPA announced on Sept. 23 that the agency would install a portable, temporary water treatment system in Gladstone, CO. The system is intended to continue treating water discharged from the Gold King Mine during winter 2015-16. This system will replace temporary settling ponds constructed by the EPA in August 2015. The transition to the portable treatment system is necessary as winter temperatures at the mine site (elevation 10,500 feet) can reach -20F, making it unsafe to manually treat water at the mine site.

All the major components for the water treatment plant are now on-site. Pipe has been run from the Gold King Mine treatment ponds down to the Gladstone site. We are now connecting all the components, and anticipate that water will start flowing tomorrow (Friday, Oct. 16). It will then take about a week to fully adjust the treatment system for optimal performance.

Additional details on the water treatment plant and future plans are contained in the attached Q&A.

For the Sept. 23 press release on the water treatment plant, please visit:

<http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine/september-23-2015-epa-announces-gold-king-mine-water-treatment-system-winter-2015-16>

Incident Command

As the field emergency response activities related to the Gold King Mine Spill are now almost completed and the EPA is transitioning to long term monitoring and assessment, the Incident Command staff will gradually demobilize and the Incident Command Post in Durango will close by the end of this month. Regional and Headquarters staff have already assumed most of the long-term response roles.

The water and sediment impacted by the Aug. 5 Gold King Mine release remain at pre-event conditions, and construction is nearly complete for a temporary treatment facility to manage water quality over the winter. The Superfund Removal Program will continue to work on stabilizing the mine. The Superfund Removal Program and the Office of Water are now finalizing the Conceptual Monitoring Plan for the Gold King Mine release and will conduct the first round of sampling this fall.

Regional staff will continue to coordinate with local, state, and tribal nations and conduct in-person visits to impacted communities to ensure close consultation on these long-term efforts. EPA Community Involvement Coordinator Cynthia Peterson will be periodically on-site in Durango and Silverton, helping to ensure that EPA makes every effort to maintain a high level of responsiveness to local needs. Should you have any concerns related to these changes or suggestions for a smooth transition, please feel free to contact Cynthia at 303-312-6879.

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From: StClair, Christie

Sent: Monday, October 19, 2015 4:01 PM

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Subject: Wastewater treatment

Hey Tripp,

Rich forwarded me your email.

I'll check into the notification for you, but in the meantime you can attribute this to an EPA spokeswoman:

Water started flowing Friday, and the system is now operating 24 hours a day. It is treating flows from 200 to 800 gpm, which includes all the flow from the mine, plus water that has been stored in ponds prior to start-up. Modifying the flow range has allowed plant engineers to adjust the instrumentation to a range of influent flow rates. Start-up adjustments and equipment testing will likely continue for another week. Based on field testing, treatment effectiveness appears to be very good so far.

Thanks,

Christie

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